

**SITUATION REPORT NO. 1**  
**INCIDENT NO. 2000-001**  
**(Continuation of Incident 99-009)**  
**(Situation Reports 1 -- 40)**  
**DATE: February 4, 2000    TIME: 10:00 a.m.**

**TO:** Governor Edward T. Schafer  
State Capitol  
Bismarck, N.D. 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Storm and flooding (FEMA-1279-ND-DR) – During the spring and summer of 1999, above normal soil moisture content throughout North Dakota, compounded by seven years of flooding and additional precipitation, resulted in overland, river and flash flooding and ground movement (landslides and mudslides). Excessive high winds associated with storm and tornado activity have also contributed to ongoing problems faced by North Dakotans. (Recovery from this event continues. Conditions for resumption of significant flooding remain prime.)
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: No change from previous reports.
3. DAMAGES: Although North Dakota has seen some precipitation relief so far this winter, rivers, potholes and ground saturation remain high as we approach spring, the wettest time of the year.

Devils Lake at Creel Bay measured 1,446.13 feet on February 4, 2000. Last summer, the maximum daily average lake elevation was 1,447.2 feet.

In December 1999, the National Weather Service (NWS) issued a special flood potential outlook for the Devils Lake Basin. This projection considered two scenarios for precipitation between December 1999 and July 2000. The first scenario assumed that precipitation would average the same as it has since 1993. With this scenario the lake would crest at 1,448.5 feet this summer. The second scenario assumed average precipitation and evaporation rates take place, which is based on 30 years prior to 1993, then the projected peak is 1,447 feet. Devils Lake naturally overflows into Stump Lake at 1,447 feet. The projection takes into account that precipitation in the basin was above normal in July and August, 1999, near normal in September 1999 and well below normal in October and November 1999. The NWS underscored in its projection that the change in elevation for Devils Lake in 2000 will be determined by soil moisture, the amount of winter and spring precipitation, temperature and evaporation rates, rainfall this summer and the amount of overflow that may occur from East Devils Lake into Stump Lake. The NWS plans to issue Spring Flood Outlooks for the Spring 2000 snowmelt season on February 11, 25, March 10 and March 24.

Currently, throughout the Devils Lake Basin, water equivalents for snow pack are lower compared to previous years during the past seven-year wet cycle. At this time, the potential for spring storms still exists. NWS staff indicated that snow associated with spring storms tends to have a higher water content because of warmer temperatures during that time of year.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: No change from previous reports.

STATE: No change from previous reports.

FEDERAL: No change from previous reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: No change from previous reports.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: Governor Schafer recently announced that the state will continue working toward solutions to Devils Lake flooding despite delays in federal funding for a permanent outlet and a Stump Lake storage plan. The state, in cooperation with the city of Devils Lake and the Devils Lake Joint Water Resource Board, will clean the channel between Devils Lake and Stump Lake, allowing water to move more efficiently between the two lakes. The N.D. State Water Commission will contact landowners in advance of the channel cleaning. Governor Schafer issued an executive order that will hasten the engineering and design work for a Twin Lakes temporary emergency outlet. The state is working with the Spirit Lake Nation on development of the project. The state is also continuing to pursue a permanent outlet by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as additional in-basin storage.

State and federal emergency management officials met January 10-12 to review preparedness levels if flooding occurs this spring. The agencies also reviewed changes in disaster recovery program requirements. Agencies participating in the meeting included the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), NWS, the St. Paul and the Omaha Districts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Adjutant General's Office and North Dakota Emergency Management.

Efforts to elevate the lake level protection system for the city of Devils Lake are essentially complete, staff at the St. Paul District of the USACE reported. The levee system has been raised to a top-of-levee elevation of 1,457 feet; construction design allows for an additional three feet, if necessary. Construction of six pumping stations is also nearing completion. This spring, the USACE will conduct testing of the pumps; plans call for most pumps to be operational by spring runoff. Pumps are located at the Creel Bay, Eagle Bend, East Ditch, N.D. Highway 20, 17<sup>th</sup> Street Southeast and the Devils Lake County Club golf course. Construction began in 1995 when the original levee was raised by seven feet, and construction crews extended the line of protection to 1,447 feet for areas not previously protected. The level of protection was increased from a lake elevation of 1,440 to 1,447 feet (the top-of-levee elevation was raised from 1,445 to 1,452 feet). Work then began in 1998 to elevate the levee alignment to a protection level of 1,450 feet with a top-of-levee elevation of 1,457 feet. The total estimated cost of all portions of the levee raise project is \$42 million.

## **Program Updates for FEMA 1279-DR-ND (Incident 99-009)**

The Public Assistance Program has paid \$34,257,268.88 to local governments and eligible private and non-profit organizations to complete infrastructure repairs to flood-damaged sites. FEMA continues a PA presence at the Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) in Bismarck, continuing with wastewater projects and ongoing issues related to bridges and roads. Expectations are that the Public Assistance Program will exceed \$40 million.

North Dakota Emergency Management was recently notified that estimated federal funding levels available through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) are currently \$11.7 million for the 1999 flood. Applications for the HMGP funding total \$29,786,627. Mitigation staff continues to work with the Interagency Hazard Mitigation Team to provide assistance for unmet needs. The staff is also coordinating with FEMA to complete a risk assessment, which will provide elevations and structures in Ramsey, Benson, Nelson, Towner and Eddy Counties. As part of that effort, staff members have been working with representatives of several agencies to provide information needed to complete the risk assessment. These agencies include the N.D. Department of Transportation, N.D. Department of Health, N.D. State Water Commission, Public Service Commission, FEMA, North Dakota Emergency Management, Spirit Lake Nation, and Ramsey, Benson, Eddy, Nelson and Towner Counties.

North Dakota Job Service has received 6,817 claims for Disaster Unemployment Assistance. As of January 28, \$12,816,844 in benefits has been paid to farmers, ranchers, farm workers, migrant workers and other self-employed individuals who have lost income because of disaster conditions.

Of the 12,321 North Dakotans who registered for assistance through FEMA's teleregistration center, 7,919 are eligible for the Disaster Housing Program. To date, FEMA has paid \$23,857,388 in benefits. Of that amount, \$10,912,117 has been paid for expanded habitability measures designed to mitigate future flood damages. Those measures include interior drain systems, sump pumps, gutters and downspouts, basement fills and land sloping work.

The Individual and Family Grant Program, administered by North Dakota Emergency Management, has approved 2,237 applications and has approved \$1,483,136 in benefits. Of that amount, \$375,975 has been designated for mitigation measures to include installation of dry wells designed to alleviate ground water pressure, septic sewer mound systems and construction of mechanical rooms for homes where basement fills have occurred.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has issued approved 1,245 applications to disaster victims and has administered \$12,648,600 in low-interest loans as of February 1. Of that amount, approximately 72 percent has been designated for expanded habitability measures.

## **FEMA 1174-DR-ND, 1997 Spring Flooding**

The N.D. Geological Survey (NDGS) has published a NDGS Series 25, titled "Flooding in the Grand Forks – East Grand Forks Area." This publication revises and updates versions of the reports published in 1968 and 1980. The publication includes a history of flooding in the two-city area, with a description and analysis of the major floods that have occurred since record keeping began 1882. The

report also provides an overall analysis of the flood problems in the Grand Forks area and recommendations for dealing effectively with future floods.

On January 31, 2000, officials for Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, along with representatives of the USACE, signed the official Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) for the two communities' permanent flood protection. The PCA commits local sponsors and the USACE to the construction and funding of a proposed flood protection project for the two cities. The federal budget for fiscal year 2000 included \$10 million for the project; however, these funds could not be expended until the parties signed the agreement. Total costs for the project are estimated at \$348,696,000 with \$131,469,000 of the costs attributed to the East Grand Forks portion of the project and \$217,227,000 of the costs attributed to the Grand Forks portion.

#### **Incident 99-093, Fires Statewide**

The administrator of the federal Farm Service Agency declared McKenzie County eligible for emergency loan assistance due to damages and losses caused by excessive winds and fire that began October 31. Two fires in McKenzie County destroyed approximately 85,000 acres of grazing land, impacting 35 to 45 ranchers. Five other counties were named as contiguous and are also eligible for emergency loan assistance: Billings, Dunn, Golden Valley, Mountrail and Williams. Farm Service Agency will accept emergency loan applications through August 22, 2000.

#### **Incident 00-006, Integrated Emergency Management Course**

More than 125 representatives of 43 state agencies, two non-profit organizations the NWS, Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation and 16 counties participated in a four-day Integrated Emergency Management Course (IEMC) held in Bismarck during January 24-27. Two days of classroom work provided insight into emergency management concepts, media relations, the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP) and the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) procedures. Agency representatives also participated in a two-day exercise designed to test their responses to disaster response and recovery issues. The course was directed by FEMA and facilitated by instructors from the Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No additional requests for assistance have been reported since the last Situation Report was issued on December 10, 1999.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: FEMA, SBA, Bureau of Indian Affairs, BIA, USACE, consulting engineers and members of the N.D. Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).
9. OTHER: Situation Reports published by North Dakota Emergency Management are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is:  
<http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

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Douglas C. Friez, State Director